may 1868

PASTORAL LETTER

OF THE

Fathers of the Fourth Provincial Council of

QUEBEC.

QUEBEC, 14th May 1868.

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We, by the mercy of God and the appointment of the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop and Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Quebec,

To all the Ecclesiastics, to all the religious Communities of both sexes, and to all the faithful of the said Province, health and benediction in our Lord.

The great Apostle of the Gentiles, writing to his dear disciple Timothy, and through him to all the bishops of the world, lays down the following important counsels: "*I charge thee before God and Jesus-Christ, who shall judge the living and "the dead, by his coming and his Kingdom: preach the word: be instant in season, out of "season, reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. But be thou vigilant, labor "in all things, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry.*" (II Tim. "IV. 1...)

It is to accomplish this important duty, Dearly Beloved Brethren, that not satisfied with often addressing you in our own dioceses, we unite our voices to day in a general pastoral letter. For the remembrance of the terrible condamnation with which the great Apostle threatens us, will not allow us to neglect any

of the means most suitable to make you understand the importance of the counsels which we have to give you : and whilst listening to what we say to you, do not forget that we speak to you by order *of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ the Son, who will one day judge the living and the dead*, both the pastors and their flocks.

I.

THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF.

It is right, Dear Brethren, that our first glance should be directed towards Him whom the Sovereign and Invisible Pastor has chosen to govern, in a visible manner, the Church redeemed by the blood of the Immaculate Lamb. Children of the Church, nothing that concerns our mother can be indifferent to us, and if we rejoice with her, we must also share in her sorrows and her fears.

You are not unacquainted with the audacious projects of those impious men who wish, not merely to rob, but also to annihilate the apostolic throne upon which is seated the successor of Blessed Peter, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Father and the Teacher of all christians. In order to conceal the perfidy of their hateful plots, they feign to aim at nothing more than the destruction of the temporal power of the Pope, and hypocritically protest that they have the greatest respect for his spiritual authority. We will not allow ourselves to be deceived by those treacherous protestations. We understand too well that : " It is by " a particular design of divine Providence, who rules and governs all things, that " this temporal sovereignty has been given to the Roman Pontiff, in order that, " not being subjected to any civil power, he may exercise, with the most complete " liberty and without any hindrance, throughout the world, the supreme charge " of the apostolic ministry which has been confided to him by Christ our Lord." (*Encyclical of 19th January* 1860.)

" In fact, all know that the faithful would not have an entire confidence " in, nor complete obedience towards, the Roman Pontiff, if they saw him subject " to a foreign prince and deprived of his liberty. " (*Allocution of 20th April* 1849.)

This temporal sovereignty being intended for the good of the Church, it is not surprising that the enemies of this Church should endeavor to destroy it ; nor is it more surprising that all true and sincere catholics should consider themselves as threatened and struck to the heart by all the plots directed against the Pope, and that they look for means to defend their common Father.

We are happy to be able to state that you have fully understood, and nobly

accomplished this grand and urgent duty of filial piety towards the Sovereign Pontiff, since, in the fulfilment of it, you generously subscribed to the Peter's pence fund, and sent a number of brave volunteers, who have gone to join in the ranks of the pontifical army. Yes! christian fathers and mothers, you nobly performed that duty when you allowed your sons to devote themselves to the defence of the Holy See. To you especially, brave soldiers of Christ, to you, who have without hesitation left your parents, your country, your hopes of a brilliant future, to protest in the name of catholic Canada, against the outrages of the enemies of the Church, to you be given immortal glory, and a reward in eternity, by Him who does not forget even *a cup of cold water given in his name to the least among his brethren !* (Matt., X. 42.) May God protect you, children of catholic Canada ! Show yourselves ever worthy of the kindness of the Sovereign Pontiff, worthy of the piety of your ancestors, worthy of the holy cause which you have sworn to defend !

In the midst of the anguish which the calamities of the Church cause us to feel, Divine Goodness does not leave its children deprived of all consolation. The bonds of unity have never been so closely drawn together as in our days. We might imagine ourselves transported to those times when " *the multitude of christians had but one heart and one soul.* " (Acts, IV. 32.)

In truth, Peter, in the person of his successor, is as, it were *imprisoned* in this narrow part of his patrimony that his enemies have not yet been able to wrest from him ; but yet, what a cry of condemnation is heard from all parts against the spoilers ! How many prayers ascend each day from the two hundred millions of catholic hearts scattered over the entire universe ! *Peter therefore was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing, by the Church unto God for him* (Acts, XII. 5). Let us then have confidence : the arm of God is not shortened, and we shall see the day when the successor of St. Peter shall cry out with transports of joy : *Now I know in very deed, that the Lord hath sent his Angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.* (Acts, XII. 11.)

No doubt, this is what sustains the admirable courage of Pius IX, in the midst of those dangers. Ah ! to prove to the whole world, the divine mission of the catholic church, we have only to appeal to the sublime spectacle of this feeble old man, deprived of human succor, facing with energy, and with a calm brow, the most terrible storm that has as yet assailed the vessel of the Church. Blessed be the *God of all consolation* (II Cor., I. 3), who, while consoling and strengthening our Father, consoles and strengthens his children, and enables them to await with certainty, the fulfilment of these

words : *The gates of hell shall not prevail against her.* (S. Matt., XVI. 18). *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.* (S. Luke, XXI. 33.)

" We are certain, says Pius IX, that God will not be wanting to his word, " and that a day will come, when God, whose works are wonderful, will show " that this storm has not been excited to bury the vessel of the church, but " rather to raise it up. " (*Allocution of 30th September* 1861.)

But whilst confiding in those promises of the Eternal Word to await the final triumph of Holy Church, let us not forget, Dearly Beloved Brethren, that God wishes to associate us with the glory of this triumph, by making us share in the events which must bring about this result. *No one is crowned*, says St. Paul, *except he strive lawfully* (II Tim., II., 5). God only calls a small number of choice souls to pour out their blood for this noble cause, but all can and ought to keep their hands raised towards heaven to implore the divine assistance. It is to the prayers of the primitive Church that Saint Peter owed his delivery from prison. Let us pray then with fervor for the sovereign Pontiff ; let us pray with perseverance as the early Christians. And that our prayers may be judged worthy of being heard, let us keep our hearts free from sin,—let us also add *almsgiving which makes us find mercy before the Lord.* (Tobias, XII.9).

Oh ! would to God that the occasions of practising this holy charity *which is the greatest of virtues* (I. Cor., XIII. 13), were not too frequent for our feeble resources ! At least, let us do what we can, in order *that the measure of our merit may be good, and pressed down, and shaken together and running over. For,* adds Jesus-Christ, *with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.* (S. Luke, VI. 38). This rule is short but comprehensive : observe it ever, and in an especial manner when you are called upon to contribute towards the Peter's pence fund. Bear in mind that the blessings of heaven are promised to the child who honours, consoles and succors his father.

II.

THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH AND THE HOLY CHILDHOOD.

To the Peter's pence we ought to join two other eminently catholic works, the Propagation of the Faith, and the Holy Childhood.

Charity, according to the word of our Lord, *is a fire that only wants to be enkindled.* (S. Luke, XII. 49.) It is from the heart of the adorable Saviour that came the spark destined to inflame the entire world ; therefore, if the faith, which is in you, Dearly Beloved Brethren, is truly living and *animated by charity,* (Gal. V. 6) you will not want for zeal to communicate this inestimable

benefit to so many poor souls *still seated in darkness and in the shadow of death, that the light of life may shine upon them.* (S. Matt., IV. 16.)

What better means of testifying to God your gratitude for so many graces that he granted you in holy Baptism, in Confirmation, in the adorable Eucharist, in Penance, in the divine Word ! You are asked so little to enable the holy waters of Baptism to be poured out upon the thousands that, until then, had borne no other yoke than that of the devil : to open to innumerable sinners the saving bath of Penance, and to present to them the delicious banquet of the divine Eucharist, and finally to place them in the way of arriving at eternal happiness !

Whoever, says Jesus-Christ, *receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet ; and he that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man, shall receive the reward of a just man. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.* (S. Matt., X. 41. 42.) What then shall not be the reward of him, who by his prayers, and by his alms, shall have contributed to draw into holy church those thousands of souls upon whom are poured out every year, the vivifying waters of Baptism ?

A reward even in this world, by the spiritual and temporal blessings which God will bestow upon the families and the parishes where those associations of the Propagation of the Faith and of the holy Childhood are encouraged with zeal.

A reward by the sweet joy of having procured for our fellow men an inestimable benefit, and of having discharged a part of the debt of gratitude which we owe to God.

A reward at the hour of death and before the tribunal of the sovereign Judge, where good works alone can find favor for us.

A reward, finally, for all eternity, by a new degree of glory and of happiness ; *For,* says the prophet Daniel, *they that are learned shall shine as the lightness of the firmament : and they that instruct many unto justice, as stars for all eternity.* (Daniel, XII. 3.)

The association of the holy Childhood ought to be specially dear to all christian parents who have at heart the true happiness of their children. " Indeed, says " the Sovereign Pontiff, by inviting children to labor according to their strength, " for the salvation of these poor abandoned little ones, it procures for themselves, " by this act of charity, the occasion of testifying to God their gratitude for the " privileged grace by which the Lord has deigned to call them to the admirable " light of Faith. Hence this new work of christian charity, far from injuring

" that of the Propagation of the Faith, helps it in a wonderful manner, because, " by enkindling in the hearts of the children the first little sparks of charity, it " imbues them with the true sentiments of mercy and compassion, and disposes " them to become attached afterwards to the pious work of the Propagation of " the Faith." (*Brief of* 18*th July* 1856.)

III.

EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

By interesting your children from an early age in those pious associations of the holy Childhood and of the Propagation of the Faith, Dearly Beloved Brethren, you will only fulfil one of the numerous duties, the neglecting of which would have the most frightful consequences for yourselves, for your families, for the entire country. You will not imitate those blind parents who imagine that everything is done, when they have watched with care over the corporal life and health of their children, when they have given them bread to eat, and clothes to cover them, especially when they have laid up a rich inheritance for them.

Ah! we conjure you not to neglect that which is greatest and most important in your children. Their hearts still innocent and tender, easily receive the impression of the lessons and models presented to them, and each day, experience confirms this word of Holy Scripture: *A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it* (Prov., XXII. 6). Strive, therefore, by your examples, still more than by your words, to develop in those young souls all the germs of the virtues that nature and the grace of holy Baptism have deposited in them. Would to God that each house of this province were, like the blessed sanctuary of Nazareth, the dwelling-place of a truly christian family, an image of this holy family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph! What union of hearts! what mutual charity! what obedience and filial piety! what gentleness in authority, what gravity in the conduct of parents! what a happiness, in fine, both for parents and children!

In this way, would soon disappear from our midst that deplorable tendency towards the contempt of parental authority, and the premature emancipation of youth. This destruction of the order established by Divine Providence afflicts and alarms us, for it forshadows in the future, many evil days and incalculable woes. How can those children be good citizens and fervent christians, who have been abandoned to all their own fancies, accustomed to despise the salutary yoke of paternal direction, and allowed to plunge into that *universal malice which idleness teaches.* (Eccl., XXXIII. 29.)

After having formed the hearts of your children to virtue, by your examples, Dearly Beloved Brethren, endeavor to procure for them the advantages of a good education, and refuse not to make the sacrifices that the fulfilment of this duty may require from you. No doubt, you are not bound to anything beyond your means, but take care not to exaggerate in your own eyes your inability or your indigence, lest some day, when it will be too late, you may have to regret that you neglected so important a duty as that of instructing your children.

It would be a strange and deplorable contradiction, if, after having taken great care to form the hearts of your children, by your teachings and by your examples, you allowed them all kinds of books and reviews, newspapers and novels, without troubling yourselves to keep away from them every thing that might corrupt their faith or their morals.

But it would be still more deplorable, if, in the choice of masters to whom you wish to confide your children, you took no heed of moral securities, and if you looked before all to knowledge or cheapness. Of course, knowledge is a necessary quality in a good teacher, but it is not the only one. " For, says the " Sovereign Pontiff, Gregory XVI, of happy memory, when youth is corrupted " by the maxims and examples of its teachers, the loss to religion is much greater, " and the perversity of morals becomes more profound. " (*Encyclical of Gregory XVI. the 15th. Aug.* 1832.)

This is why the Pontiff who now governs so gloriously the Church, earnestly recommends to all the bishops to watch " that the youths collected together in " schools, should have none but blameless masters, both in religion and in morals, " in order that, whilst teaching them true virtue, they may enable them to discover " the snares laid for them by the wicked, to avoid their deadly errors and to " serve with utility both religion and country. " (*Encyclical of Pius* IX, *8th December* 1849).

A good master, or a good mistress, is a precious treasure for christian parents, and too many sacrifices cannot be made to obtain them. But, on the other hand, what dread ought you feel for a master, or mistress, whose sentiments and conduct would not be truly catholic ; whose words would be unworthy of their high mission ; whose examples would not lead to piety, and still more, whose examples would be vicious ! For the terrible day will come, when *the heavens shall reveal his iniquity and the earth shall riseup against him.* (Job, XX. 27.)

Our first provincial Council, in its fifteenth decree, has already warned you of the great danger of *mixed schools*, where children of different religions are united together under the same teacher. There, on the pretext of respecting the different religious beliefs, they carefully abstain from alluding to any

religion, and thus those tender minds become accustomed, little by little, to consider the service of God as useless and indifferent. This system, therefore, is only fit to form those lukewarm souls which God detests, and which he *will vomit from his mouth.* (Apoc., III. 16.)

The christian on earth, is surrounded by enemies who, *like roaring lions, seek to devour him* (I. S. Peter, V. 8), he ought therefore, to be always ready, for the combat, and find in his own energy, aided by the grace of God, the courage necessary to protect himself. But what courage and what energy will we find in a tepid soul which allows itself to be carried off like a cowardly soldier, and destroyed by the enemy without a struggle! This is the reason that satan, *who is a murderer from the beginning,* (S. John, VIII. 44) strives so earnestly to instil every where, and specially into the minds of youth, this spirit of tepedity and religious indifference, by concealing it under the fair names of *toleration*, of *liberalism*, of *liberty* and such like.

But the danger is still greater in those protestant schools where falsified translations of the holy Scriptures are read; where the dogmas and principles of faith are attacked with skill and a diabolical persistency; where even the mere sight of the teacher, who professes heresy, tends to diminish the dislike that the tender mind of childhood ought to have for error.

The same divine law which obliges you to give to your children religious instruction and good example, obliges you to remove with care, every thing that might destroy the effect of your lessons and examples, and corrupt the faith and the morals of your children.

IV.

BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS.

Already, on many occasions, we have exhorted you to form *Parochial Libraries.* They complete and supplement the schools, by continuing and propagating their fruits. Christian parents ought to second the zeal and efforts of their parish priests to establish and maintain so important a work. A good book in a family is like the echo of the divine word; it is a friend which tells the truth without either fear or flattery; it is a teacher always ready to instruct you; a disinterested adviser from whom you will receive light in your doubts and consolation in your pains.

But, on the contrary, what fearful havoc a bad book can produce! Avoid then, as a plague, those books which the spirit of evil seeks to scatter every where; do not allow these deadly poisons to enter your dwellings, lest your children should

stretch forth their hands to iniquity. (Ps., CXX. IV. 3.) Do not encourage by your subscriptions, the libraries where these impious works are found mixed up with good books, which are placed there only the more easily to deceive the faithful.

Avoid especially those impious or obscene newspapers, which seem to have issued from hell *to blaspheme against the Lord* and *against his Christ* (Ps., II. 2), and to annihilate every feeling of modesty and of right reason. Here, Dearly Beloved Brethren, we would be glad to be able to say that this fearful danger is not imminent, that is only a distant evil. But, alas ! you know well that there are published, in this province, some papers which are a deadly poison for their readers.

We do not speak of certain protestant publications which heap up insults and calumnies on the Church of Jesus-Christ, disfigure her dogmas, in order to turn them into ridicule, invent pretended conversions to protestantism, and proclaim with a loud voice the efforts of societies of which the avowed object is to destroy the faith of our good catholics. These papers bear in their very title and in the openness of their attack the antidote to their pernicious doctrines.

The bad newspapers which we wish more expressly to point out to you, are those whose editors and contributors have learned from the lips of a catholic mother and in a catholic school, the doctrines and precepts of Holy Church, and who are now in rebellion against her. Each day, the columns of their journals are polluted with insults against the Church, her chief pastors, her ministers, her sacraments, her doctrines, her most authorized practices. These men, enemies of the true faith, and forgetful of their own salvation, continually insinuate in their writings *indifferentism*, that is to say, a system which accommodates itself to the most contradictory religious beliefs, which claims to open the haven of eternal salvation to the followers of all religions whatever they may be. They readily praise every thing done outside of the catholic Church, and even what is done against her. They repeat with delight, the calumnies of heresy and infidelity, and too often, they invent some themselves. They become the echoes of all the lying accusations against the catholic clergy, but they will not receive, or they distort the defence of the accused. The affected silence which these men keep, in many circumstances, when a true child of the Church cannot remain silent, is another proof of the anti-religious tendency of the papers which they publish.

Even the devotedness of those brave youths who have gone to fight for the cause of the Holy Father, has not found favor in the eyes of those so-called catholics. They have but words of bitter reproach for those courageous soldiers of Christ ; for the generosity of the parents who have allowed their children to

depart ; for the zeal of those who, by their alms-deeds have contributed towards the carrying out of this catholic idea. Nay, have they not been cynical enough to deplore the victory which prevented the tomb of the apostles from falling into the hands of the enemies of the Church ?

Such are the men who call themselves catholics, and who, in their hypocrisy, still dare to say that in all this, they only seek to remove from the sanctuary, the abuses which would tarnish its beauty, and to prevent liberty from being destroyed by the priesthood.

It must be then concluded, that no catholic can, without mortal sin, be the proprietors of, or editor print such journals, or write in them, or help to diffuse them.

We add without hesitation, that every true patriot ought to abstain from such things. For setting aside the impiety of these newspapers, what must we think of men who give all their admiration to foreign political institutions, and manifest only dislike and contempt for those of their country !

What would be the final result of these dangerous doctrines, if they succeeded in gaining ground amongst us ? The experience of all ages, and especially of the last hundred years, teaches us that, when once religion is destroyed amongst a people, neither repose nor stability can any longer be hoped for. The bonds of christian charity once sundered, anarchy accompanies very closely the contempt of authority, and revolution with all its horrors, soon fulfils to the letter this terrible prophecy : *The Lord shall enter into judgement with the inhabitants of the land ; for there is no truth, and there is no mercy, and there is no knowledge of God in the land. Cursing and lying and killing, and theft and adultery have overflowed and blood hath touched blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth in it shall languish.* (Osée, IV, I.) *And the earth is infected by the inhabitants thereof : because they have transgressed the laws, they have changed the ordinance, they have broken the everlasting covenant.* (Isaias, XXIV. 5.)

Thanks be to God, the greatest number of newspapers in this province, by their religious and social principles, tend to the preservation of order in civil society, of good morals in families, and of religion in all hearts. We find in them whatever it concerns us to know of public affairs, and of the events which take place in the world. There can, therefore, be no valid reason for encouraging, by subscriptions, the detestable journals of which we have spoken.

V.

POLITICS AND ELECTIONS.

" True and perfect liberty, and equality amongst men, says Pius IX, have " been placed under the safeguard of christian law, since *the Almighty who has*, " *made both the little and the great, and has care of both* (Wisdom, VI. 8), will " judge without acception of persons, and will exempt no one from *this universal* " *judgment of justice, of which he has fixed the day* (Acts, XVII 31.), in which *Jesus-* " *Christ will come in the glory of his Father, and with his angels, to render to each one* " *according to his works.*" (S. Matt., XVI. 27.) (*Encyclical of 8th December* 1849.)

Men who wish to deceive you, Dearly Beloved Brethren, tell you that religion has nothing to do with politics. Not being able, or not daring to deny the truth of this judgment that Jesus Christ will one day pronounce upon all men, they wish to limit its object to private life. They admit that in one's private conduct it is not lawful to think in an unreasonable manner, to speak like a madman, to act withouth truth, without honor and without shame. They will acknowledge that the clergy are right when they appeal, in the name of God, against these disorders in private life ; but as soon as there is question of politics, these same men accuse us of tyranny and of intolerable despotism, because we condemn the unbridled licence of thinking, of saying, of doing every thing. What ! will they refuse us the right of protesting against extravagant ideas, against licentious words, against theft, against perjury, against unjust violence, against blasphemy, intemperance, and even murder itself, whenever these excesses are committed in the name of liberty, or of a political party, or of any opinion ? It is thus that they endeavor to destroy in politics, every idea of justice, of truth, of right, of honor and of religion. " Now, says Pius IX, wherever religion is banished from civil society, " and the doctrine and authority of divine revelation rejected, the correct idea " of justice and of human law becomes obscured and lost, and material force " usurps the place of justice and of true law." (*Encyclical of 8th December* 1864.)

Thus they wish to banish God from civil society, and to emancipate themselves from his holy law in public life. They forget that the same God who will judge individuals is *He who will judge the nations* (Ps., VII. 9), and who will pronounce a terrible judgment upon those who govern them : " *Give ear*, says the Holy Ghost, *you that rule the people... For power is given you by the Lord, and strength by the Most High, who will examine your works and search out your thoughts : because being ministers of his Kingdom, you have not judged rightly , nor kept the law of justice, nor walked according to the will of God. Horribly and speedily will he appear to you : for a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule.*" (Wisdom, VI. 5. 6.)

It is since these doctrines have been broached, that our country, formerly so peacable and so happy, has become the theatre of deplorable scenes of violence, of disorder and of all sorts of scandals during the elections. Men, who find their interest in misleading the people, have exalted beyond all bounds their liberty and independance, in order to succeed better in making use of them as blind instruments for their own ambition.

They first laid down this false principle against which we have already protested, that religion has nothing to do with politics; then they insisted that in the selection of a candidate, you had only to follow your own pleasure, and the caprice of your will: and finally, laying aside all truth and justice, they have gone so far as to allow every thing to be said or done that might be thought useful in securing the triumph of the candidate of your choice.

These are monstrous errors, Dearly Beloved Brethren, and, wo to the country where they should take root! wo to the governement which thinks of ruling without God! wo to the people which, in the exercise of its political rights, ignores the eternal laws of sound reason and justice!

Far from us the thought of denying you this true liberty and independence which the constitution of our country guarantees to you; what we deplore, what we condemn, is the abuse that is made of it; it is the lamentable excesses into which so many fall, as if this liberty and this independence authorized you to trample under foot all divine and human laws.

Remember that, one day, God will judge your elections; he will ask an account of your intentions, of your choice, of your vote, of your words and of your acts, in the exercise of this important right. At the same time that the constitution gives you the right of selecting your representatives, God imposes on you the obligation of using this liberty only for the public good, and of giving your votes only to men capable of procuring it, and sincerely disposed to do so. Hence arises another obligation for you: that of studying well those who solicit your votes. You would certainly be guilty of very great imprudence before God and men, if you gave your suffrage for the first comer who presents himself with fair words, without examining his capacity, or his principles. To defend your civil and religious rights, you cannot depend upon a man who is not religious, and of proved honor and integrity. What confidence could you have in an unbeliever who laughs at conscience, at religion and at God himself? in a man who only goes to church at election time? who boasts of carrying the election by fraud, by violence, by calumny, by perjury? who wishes to buy your votes with money? Should you not dread that after having bought you, he will sell

you in his turn, and with great profit to himself, but to the great injury of your most precious interests ?

Oh ! Dear Brethren, is it not a shame for our country that there should be electors so base as to sell their votes for money, to promise their suffrage to those who promise them most money ?

Some have gone still farther in this dishonorable career. They have sold their liberty and their independence in order to satisfy their wretched passion for intoxicating liquors !

Because human justice is powerless to punish those who are guilty of such iniquity and infamy, can you imagine that the supreme Judge will require no account of them ? Do you believe that, at the tribunal of infinite justice, corruption and calumny, and falsehood, violence, perjury, hatred, intemperance and other disorders will not be punished because they are committed at election times? No, no, Dearly Beloved Brethren, those who then do such things in order to uphold their cause, even if it were the best in the world, will infallibly bear the punishment of their crime.

VI.

OF OATHS.

The name of God is holy and terrible (Ps., CX. 9), it ought to be pronounced with the most profound respect ; *for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.* (Exod., XX. 7.)

It is also said in Scripture : *And thou shalt swear : As the Lord liveth, in truth and in judgment, and in justice.* (Jerem. IV. 2.)

He who takes an oath, calls the God of all truth to witness the truth of what he says. An oath is a mark of homage rendered to the sovereign veracity of God. On the contrary, perjury has been considered by all nations as a fearfull outrage on the Divinity, as an abominable crime worthy of the most terrible chastisements.

We cannot conceal it from you, Dearly Beloved Brethren, we are alarmed, at seeing with what facility certain persons, forgetful of the fear of God, dare to perjure themselves, either before the tribunals of justice, or at times of elections. So, for a miserable interest, to secure the triumph of a candidate who is sometimes unworthy of the smallest confidence, the adorable name of God is profaned. And what consummates and crowns this iniquity, and makes us fear for our country the effects of the just indignation of the Lord, is that they are not afraid to justify such enormous abuses ; they endeavor to form false consciences, and to palliate in their own eyes the impiety and abomination of perjury.

Could we, Dearly Beloved Brethren, keep silence with regard to so great an impiety and social disorder, and not recall to your memory the sanctity of an oath ?

It is always a mortal sin to take an oath to affirm any thing that we know to be false.

It is always a mortal sin to perjure one-self in order to affirm that one is an elector, or that he possesses really, and in good faith, sufficient property, whilst his conscience testifies to the contrary.

It is always a mortal sin to induce any one to commit perjury.

Fear the great God who holds your lives in his hands : fear to offend the sovereign Judge who is the witness of all your thoughts, and of all your words, and *who has the power not only of condemning you to death, but also of casting your souls into eternal flames.* (S. Luke, XII. 5.) What will it then avail you if having, by unlawful means, by fraud, by violence, by perjury, gained an election, or even *gained the entire world, you lose your soul for all eternity ?* (S. Matt., XVI. 28.)

VII.

OF PROHIBITED SOCIETIES.

What we have just said concerning the enormity of perjury, brings us naturally to speak to you of those rash oaths and of those rash promises, by which men are initiated into those societies called *secret*, because they pledge themselves to keep the most profound and most inviolable secrecy with regard to the aim, the resolutions, the acts and the members of these associations.

The holy catholic Church formally and under pain of excommunication, forbids her children to be enrolled in the secret societies, whether they exact an oath of secrecy or a simple promise. Experience proves how dangerous they are both for Church and state. Moreover, common sense alone will tell us that truth and justice are not afraid of the light, and that any association with a praiseworthy object in view would not conceal itself in impenetrable mysteries.

" Close your ears then, says the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo XII, of blessed " memory, close your ears to the words of those who, in order to entice " you into their assemblies, will assure you that nothing is done there " contrary to reason and religion. In the first place, the guilty oath that is " taken, even in the lower grades, is sufficient to enable you to understand " that you are forbidden to enter into those grades or to remain in them. In

the next place, although it is not customary to confide what is most criminal " or compromising to persons in the inferior grades, it is nevertheless manifest " that the power and audacity of these societies are increased in proportion " to the number and the union of their members. So persons in the lower " ranks ought to be considered as accomplices of all the crimes that are " committed by the society." (*Apostolic letter of Leo XII, 13th March* 1826.)

Keep away also from other societies, not so secret, it is true, but still too dangerous for you. On the pretext of protecting poor workingmen against the rich and the powerful, who might wish to oppress them, the chiefs and propagators of these societies seek to raise and enrich themselves at the expense of the workingmen, often too credulous. They proclaim aloud the fair names of *mutual protection* and of *charity*, in order to keep their dupes in continual agitation and to foment troubles, disorder and injustice. Hence result, for the poor workmen, two great evils. Firstly, they expose themselves to the danger of losing their faith, their morals, and every feeling of honesty and justice, by joining unknown men who, unfortunately, are too clever in communicating their own wickedness. In the second place, the sad results of these associations have been, in this country, as in the United States, in England, in France, and every where, most detrimental to public peace and order. The working classes have been plunged into deeper misery by them ; the trades by which they earned their livelihood have in some cases been totally ruined ; and human justice has not unfrequently been obliged to add its rigors to these chastisements already too great.

Be then persuaded, Dearest Brethren, that when your pastors and confessors warn you against these societies, they do so through motives of real friendship ; great would be your blindness if, despising their admonitions, you hearkened to the voice of strangers and unknown men, who flatter you the better to despoil you ; who hold forth seductive promises, the more easily to draw you into the abyss of misery from which they care not to lift you up.

VIII.

OF INTEMPERANCE.

We must also forewarn you, Dearest Brethren, against an enemy, who under the most seductive outward forms, conspires against your peace, your fortunes, your health, your families and your eternal salvation. Oh ! what hideous ruin follows in the wake of that infernal monster called *drunkenness !* How many bitter tears has it not caused to be shed ! Of how many crimes has it not been

the source! *Wo to you that rise up early in the morning,* cries out the prophet Isaias, *to follow drunkenness and to drink till the evening. Wo to you that are mighty to drink wine, and stout men at drunkenness.* (Isaias, V. 11. 22.)

We do not by these words, intend to pronounce malediction against poor erring children, for whose salvation we would willingly lay down our lives: it is always more grateful to us to pardon and bless, but we cannot help bringing to mind the words by which the Holy Ghost announces, with infallible certainty, the fate which awaits the drunkard. And what shall we say of those retailers of spirituous liquors who become the agents of Satan in this infamous and homicidal traffic? *Wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh!* (S. Matt., XVIII. 7.)

Wo to the drunkard; but wo, a thousand times, to the retailer of spirituous liquors who is the first cause of all those crimes!

How could it be otherwise since there is question here of a vice which degrades man; and stifles within him every sentiment of honour shame and affection; which ruins families and draws down on them the most dreadful chastisements, by reason of the crimes and blasphemies of which it is the source! Does not this vice kill at once the soul and body of the unfortunate man who becomes a prey to it?

We therefore appeal to all those who have the interests of our religion, and of our country at heart, to unite with us in arresting, or at least in diminishing as much as possible, the ravages of intemperance. Yes, we conjure you, by the love of our Lord Jesus-Christ, who died to redeem our souls, to pray for those unhappy men whom this fatal vice has loaded with its chains; pray that God may enlighten the hearts of those retailers of spirituous liquors; pray that they may understand the enormity of the scandal which they give: pray that God may direct our legislators to employ such means as are best calculated to eradicate an evil so prejudicial to the welfare of our country; pray, in fine, that the municipal and parochial authorities may fulfill their duties on this head, with courage and fidelity, since they must one day answer before the sovereign Judge for all the crimes they could have hindered. Alas! it but too often happens that the interests of a whole parish are sacrificed to the clamors and intrigues of a small number of men who favor taverns.

To those fervent prayers, unite example, by enrolling yourselves in the *Temperance Societies* and *Societies of the Cross* established in your parishes and missions. How great will be your happiness, your merit and your joy in heaven, if you thus contribute to the salvation of souls! Finally, you must not only sigh in secret, you must display courage and energy, in electing and supporting such municipal councillors as really desire to work in the good cause, and in openly protesting against the cowardly accomplices of abuses.

IX.

OF USURY.

What heart can be so insensible as not to grow sorrowful over the cruel industry of those money-lenders, who profit of the necessity of a poor unfortunate man to extort exorbitant interests? And having once entered on this path, the victims are not allowed to depart from it, till they have not a mite left in their possession to tempt the rapacity of their tyrants.

Let it be remembered by those who have money to lend, that the eternal laws of justice and charity cannot be violated without danger. Sooner or later, those rich fortunes heaped up by usury will melt away in their hands, or in those of their children before the breath of divine justice. For, says the Holy Ghost, *he that oppresseth the poor to increase his own riches, shall himself give to one that is richer, and shall be in need.* (Prov., XXII. 16.) The blood of Abel cried to heaven for justice against the murderer Cain; the tears of the poor who have been spoliated by usury, will cry to heaven against the usurer, and the usurer, like the murderer, shall not escape from the vengeance of God. *He that giveth upon usury* says the prophet Ezechiel, *and that taketh an increase, shall such a one live before the Lord? He shall not live. Seeing that he hath done these detestable things, he shall surely die, his blood shall be upon him.* (Ezech., XVIII. 13.)

For, adds the Psalmist, *I know that the Lord will do justice to the needy, and will revenge the poor.* Ps., CXXXIX. 13.)

It is true that our legislators have abolished the law by which it was formerly criminal to exact more than six per cent interest, and the tribunals oblige the borrower to pay the stipulated interest, however enormous it may be. But it would be a deplorable error to imagine that you can thereby, in conscience, exact any interest you may think fit to determine.

No, Dearest Brethren, if you have money to lend, you have not in conscience, the right of exacting for it, any interest that cupidity may prompt you to require. The laws of eternal justice still continue to exist, and all the legislators in the world could not abolish them. These laws forbid you to exact any other than a reasonable interest, the amount of which, when no civil law determines it, depends either on the special title which you may have, or on the general estimation of upright and honest men of business, with regard to the value of money. Any thing beyond this would be an unjust exaction, for which you would be bound to make restitution.

This is, Dearest Brethren, what, in our estimation, the eternal laws of

justice grant you. But there is another law, which, whether in the loaning of money, or in any other relations with your neighbour, must not be forgotten.

Under the mosaïc dispensation, the Jews were forbidden to exact the smallest interest for sums of money lent to their fellow country men. (Deut., XXIII. 19.) God wished thus to draw more closely between the children of Abraham, the links of charity which should bind brethren together.

Now, Dearest Brethren, since *God the Father so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son* (John, III. 16); since Christ so *loved us as to deliver himself up for us* (Galatians, II. 20); since the Holy Ghost *has poured forth into our hearts a ray of that infinite charity* which unites the Three Persons of the Adorable Trinity (Rom., V. 5); charity has become the law by excellence Hence, *if God hath so loved us, we ought also to love one another*, (I. John, IV. 11) as children of God and members of the same family.

This is the second law which we to day invoke, in favor of those whose poverty obliges them to borrow. Justice, indeed, allows you to require a certain interest; but do not turn a deaf ear, do not close your hearts and purses on the sweet voice of charity. Stretch forth a pitying hand to your needy brother, and as charity sometimes obliges you to give alms, so it may sometimes impose on you the obligation of lending money at a lower rate, or without interest; provided always you do not expose yourselves to the loss of your capital, or to make those extraordinary sacrifices which charity may, indeed, counsel, but which it does not prescribe.

On the other hand, Dearest Brethren, religion and justice require that you do not contract debts uselessly or beyond your means.

Therefore, avoid luxury which has caused the ruin of so many families. Do not endeavour to appear richer than you really are. Be steadfast in refusing to your children, pleasures and dress of which your means do not allow. Should your business become embarrassed, it is assuredly better to come to a favorable agreement with your creditors, and save at least the relics of your fortune by composition, than to place yourselves at the mercy of insatiable money-lenders who will ruin you inevitably: who will oblige you to sell out at the lowest figure; who will leave you on the roadside without a farthing in your possession, and often weighed down under the burden of an enormous debt.

X.

DIVERS ADMONITIONS.

Be not surprised, Dearest Brethren, if we thus venture to counsel you with regard to your temporal affairs. Religion and charity are welcome every where, and our pastoral functions, which endear you to us, prompt us to share in your troubles and anxieties, as well as in your joy and prosperity. We are pastors, not for ourselves, but for you. Jesus-Christ has confided you to our care, and in you we behold the mystic members of the divine Saviour to whose service we have consecrated our lives.

Say, Dearest Brethren, have you ever had reason to repent for having followed the advice of your pastors? Is it not proven, on the contrary, that if some had hearkened to the voice of our counsel, they would have now less reason for regret? There have been, and there will always be false friends of the people to accuse us of a desire to domineer and tyrannize over the conscience of the people; but we are very little moved by those calumnies; they shall not deter us in the least, from fulfilling towards you our duty as faithful friends, as fathers actuated by love, as ministers of Jesus-Christ, and responsible for the souls redeemed by the blood of Christ. "Let nothing deter us, says a Sovereign "Pontiff, from the accomplishment of the obligation we are under, of sustaining "all sorts of combats for the love of God, and the salvation of souls. Let us have "constantly before our eyes, the example of Him who, during his whole life, was "exposed to the contradictions of sinners; for if we give way before the "audacity of the wicked, the strength of the Episcopacy, and the divine authority "of the Church will be in danger. We can no longer call ourselves Christians, if "we tremble in presence of the threats and snares of our enemies." (*Encyclical letter of Clement XIII, 14th September* 1758.)

Have those who calumniate us, ever sacrificed their rest or their health in your behalf? Where are the institutions founded by them, in favor of the indigent sick and infirm, or for the education of youth? Is it from them that you seek help in your distress! Have these men ever given you hope or consolation in your misfortunes? Will you call those men to your bedside, at the solemn moment of death, to ask of their soul-crushing doctrines, nothingness or despair? Ah! Dearest Brethren, is it not the wildest folly, the deepest blindness, to follow in life, guides from whom you turn in dismay on your death bed?

Heresy unites its efforts to those of impiety, to steal from you the precious pearl of faith. The better to seduce you, it wears the mask of charity. It offers to your children, gratuitous education, that it may pervert their young hearts; it

distributes clothing and food, to conciliate your friendship; it sends forth among you, falsified copies of the Bible, tracts full of error, falsehood and blasphemy, that it may sow in your midst the seeds of perverse doctrines. Oh! beware of these gifts of false friendship; steadfastly refuse to receive these books, or cast them into the flames: if you sincerely desire your own salvation, and that of your children, do not allow those messengers of error to enter your houses. *For,* as St. Paul says, *what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever?* (II Cor., VI 15.)

The more precious our treasure is, the greater should be our care to avoid anything that may destroy it. Learn hence with what jealousy you should watch over the preservation of your faith. " This virtue, says the Holy Council of " Trent, (*Sess. VI. ch.* 8.) is the beginning of man's salvation; the foundation " and root of all justification, *and without it,* according to the Apostle, *it is* " *impossible to please God.* (Hebrews, XI. 6) "

" Faith, says Pius IX, is the mistress of life, the guide to salvation, the " destruction of all vice, the mother and powerful sustenance of all virtue; it " sheds the bounteous rays of its light on all nations, making them bow under " the yoke of Jesus-Christ, announcing to them peace and happiness." (*Encyclical letter, 9th November* 1846.)

But you must bear in mind, Dearest Brethren, " that faith unaccompanied " by hope and charity cannot unite us to Christ. Therefore it is true, in the most " absolute sense, to say that faith without good works is dead and useless." (*Council of Trent, sess. VII. chap.* 7.) *If thou wilt enter into life,* says Christ, *keep the commandments.* (Matthew, XIX. 17.) God who created man wholly, body and soul, desires to be honoured by man wholly. Hence, he requires that man pay him, by faith, the homage of his intelligence, and by his exterior works, manifest his submission to the supreme dominion of the Creator. " Without good works " faith cannot please God, nor will God accept good works without faith. It is " not in the sole practice of virtue, or in the exclusive observation of the precepts " but in their union with faith that we must seek out the path that leads to life " eternal." (*Letter of Pius IX to the Bishops of Austria, 17th March* 1856.)

To effectuate a union so desirable, so necessary, between faith and good works, you should not neglect any occasion of instructing yourselves in the christian doctrine, whether by attending regularly at the instructions given to you, by your pastors on Sundays and Holidays, in accordance with the ordinance of our mother the Church, or by reading good books, chosen and approved by your spiritual guides.

Approach frequently the holy sacrement of Penance, in order to purify your

souls from the least stain of sin, and to receive the counsels specially adapted to its wants. Be careful to receive from time to time the holy Eucharist, which is " the spiritual nourishment of our souls, the antidote against our daily faults, " the preservative against mortal sin, the pledge of our future glory and eternal " happiness." (*Council of Trent, Sess. XIII, chap.* 2).

Profit of the extraordinary graces which are given by heaven during the holy times of Advent, Lent, Jubilees and parochial retreats. During those days, heaven is opened, and the richest blessings are showered down on you with prodigality, to strengthen the good in their piety, and to draw to salutary repentance, men who have long walked in the ways of wickedness.

Be faithful in the observance of holy repose during Sundays and Holidays; hear mass with devotion. For the Lord tells us by the mouth of Isaias (chap. LVI. 4.): *To those that shall keep my Sabbaths and shall choose the things that please me and shall hold fast my covenant, I will give an everlasting name : I will bring them to my holy mount, and will make them joyful in my house of prayer ; their holocausts and their victims shall please me upon my altar.*

Observe also the fasts and abstinences prescribed by the Church. One of the fundamental maxims of religion is, that sin cannot be expiated save by penance. This the prophets announced ; this Jesus-Christ preached by word and example ; this the Apostles and saints have never ceased to recommend.

Such are, Dearest Brethren, the most important admonitions which we deemed it our duty to give you, at the close of this fourth provincial Council, during which we have not ceased to implore the blessings of Heaven, for yourselves, your families and your earthly welfare.

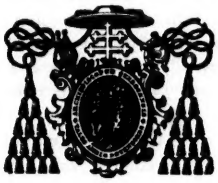
O Mary, under whose protection we are assembled, in this Metropolitan Church, dedicated to your Immaculate Conception, intercede for us with your Divine Son ! Through your all powerful intercession obtain for us that we may ever walk faithfully in the path of His Divine commandments, that we may all, one day, shepherds and flocks, be united in the mansion of eternal bliss !

Suffer, Dearest Brethren, that we terminate this pastoral letter as we began it, by recalling the words of the Holy Ghost, spoken by the Great Apostle: *Fight the good fight of faith : lay hold on life eternal, whereunto thou art called... I charge thee before God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus-Christ who gave testimony under Pontius Pilate,... that thou keep the commandment without spot, blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus-Christ, which in his time he shall show ; who is Blessed and only Mighty ; the King of kings ; and Lord of lords ; Who only hath immortality and inhabiteth light inaccessible ; whom no man hath seen nor can see ; to whom be honour and empire everlasting. Amen... Charge the rich of this world not to be high-minded, nor to*

trust in the uncertainty of riches, but in the living God, who giveth us abundantly all things to enjoy; to lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life... Grace be with thee. Amen. (I. Tim., VI. 12).

This Pastoral Letter shall be read and published, either all at once, or by parts, as it may be deemed advisable, at the prone, in all the parishes and missions of this ecclesiastical province, and in chapter, in the Religious Communities, as soon as received,

Given at the Archbishop's Palace, Quebec, under our signatures, and the seal of the Archdiocese, and the countersign of the Archbishop's Secretary, on the fourteenth day of May one thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight.



† C. F., Archbishop of Quebec.
† IG., Bishop of Montreal.
† JOS. EUGENE, Bishop of Ottawa.
† VITAL J., Bishop of Satala, *coadjutor and procurator of the Bishop of S. Bonifacius.*
† L. F., Bishop of Anthedon, *coadjutor and procurator of the Bishop of Three Rivers.*
† JOHN, Bishop of Hamilton.
† E. J. Bishop of Kingston.
† JOHN JOSEPH, Bishop of Toronto.
† C., Bishop of S. Hyacinthe.
† JOHN, Bishop of S. G. de Rimouski.
† JOHN, Bishop of Sandwich.

By order of their Lordships,

Auguste-Honoré Gosselin, Pst.,
Archbishop's Secretary.